



Switchvox gives Pet Hospital of Madison advanced UC capabilities

Digium Switchvox solves phantom calling and call quality issues at Alabama pet hospital



Single-location small businesses deserve advanced unified communications features.

Businesses with multiple locations, call centers, complex call requirements, and extensive feature customizations often require a more sophisticated business communications system, which can also be costly. Digium's Switchvox phone system has proven to be a viable and affordable solution for those complicated environments.

However, what about the average single-location small business with less than 10 employees, and relatively simple call requirements? They too deserve the same access to advanced unified communications (UC) features, with the versatility and affordability of a leading-edge VoIP business solution. The problem arises when lesser systems, claiming to be more efficient and economical for small businesses under 20 employees, have too many limitations and technical deficiencies to handle the job of even the smallest business. That's when Switchvox comes to the rescue, just as it did in the case of the Pet Hospital of Madison in Madison, Alabama.

The Pet Hospital's evolution from Pulsar360 to Switchvox came after a series of rather exasperating circumstances with their brand new Pulsar.

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Ruth Freeman
Office Manager,
Pet Hospital of Madison

The Pet Hospital's evolution from Pulsar360 to Switchvox came after a series of rather exasperating circumstances with their brand new Pulsar. The issues with the phone system had escalated to the point that Dr. Angelique Lawrence, DVM for the Pet Hospital, asking her office manager, “Why can't we just get a plain old telephone?”

Call quality problems with competing system have vet asking for her POTS back!

While building a new state-of-the-art building to house their veterinary practice, the Pet Hospital of Madison contracted with Gigaparts, a full service PC store and reseller for business communications solutions. They wanted to invest in an all-new VoIP telecommunications infrastructure that expanded their current data network to include voice. According to Office Manager, Ruth Freeman, they ended up going with a Pulsar system which worked great while occupying temporary office space just a couple of miles up the street from their new building. Once they moved into the new facility, the glitches with the new phone system began.

“It gave us nothing but problems,” Freeman says. “We had terrible connections and the call quality was awful, I mean customers couldn't hear us. It dropped calls, and customers complained that on their end, the phone just rang and rang and rang with no one picking up. Unfortunately, it wasn't always ringing here in the building.

Another problem was that when you hung up a call, it would not disconnect, and it would send through phantom calls. Those calls would proceed to ring the next extension. When you picked up, there was no one there because the call had been hung up; then it would this to every extension, circulating to every phone throughout the building without the ability to answer it or disconnect it. It was infuriating!”

Ed Clifford, Sales & Marketing Leader at Gigaparts, says they built a top-notch network with security, a guest network, and all of the newest switches and cabling. “We went in over a weekend and programmed all the phones, ported over numbers, and had them ready to go live on Monday morning. For a business that is as customer service-oriented as the Pet Hospital, the Pulsar just could not perform in that location.”

Small businesses are always told how important a good location is from a sales and marketing standpoint, but it's not often realized how location may influence connectivity issues – at least that's what the Pet Hospital of Madison discovered. It seemed the veterinarian's new location on the east side of a main road in town, just two miles down from the temporary location, was known as a terrible ISP zone, widely affected by frequent outages; but that was no excuse for Freeman and her crew.

“I spoke to Pulsar's top management several times and they had Gigaparts jumping through hoops saying it was lag time or this and that. Gigaparts was here for two straight days, not charging us a penny to try and get to the bottom of it, but before they had the system down to two cans and a piece of string, Pulsar could not solve the mystery,” says Freeman. “It was a phone system that simply did not know it was a phone system.”

Gigaparts was a recently approved reseller for Digium, and Brewer had just completed training on Switchvox. It was the perfect opportunity for them to see Switchvox in action.

Switchvox to the Rescue

That was when Gigaparts representative Chris Brewer, who was already not satisfied with Pulsar prior to the problems at the Pet Hospital, decided Digium's Switchvox was a better VoIP business solution. Gigaparts was a recently approved reseller for Digium, and Brewer had just completed training on Switchvox. It was the perfect opportunity for them to see Switchvox in action.

Gigaparts installed a Digium Switchvox 80, the smallest but best choice for small businesses needing a full-featured, server-class PBX for up to 30 users. Built on a unified communications platform that is just as powerful as any enterprise-level system, Switchvox is provisioned with a GUI that let Gigaparts configure multiple users and set the entire system up quickly.

"They brought in the Digium IP phones and set it up so that I could play with it over a couple of days," says Freeman. "It was important to Gigaparts that we use it first to test for call quality, since that had been a major setback with the Pulsar system. The first call I made was to my daughter who said the difference in call quality was like daylight and dark."

Digium IP phones and features end call chasing and poor call quality

The Pet Hospital of Madison purchased nine Digium IP phone sets, and Freeman says they are very pleased with the many convenient features they offer.

"I like that you don't have one hundred-thousand pages of unnecessary papers from the fax machine. When another vet sends over pet records, there is a lot of paper wasted before you get to the actual information the doctor needs. With Switchvox, a fax comes in as digital file and I can go directly to the information I need and discard the rest. It also eliminates coming in the next morning to all this paper on the fax machine that came in overnight. Barbara, our receptionist, used to have to unfurl it all and get it to the appropriate person. In addition, even with emails, she can weed out the important from the unimportant.

"I also like the mobility feature and the fact that if I'm out of town or we are closed for a holiday or a weekend, all I have to do is hit the 'notifications' button, and Switchvox sends me notifications, and I can tap into the system and check my voice mail and email. If it can't wait until regular business hours, I can call people back from my cellphone," she continues. "When we are closed, the system also reroutes emergency calls to our 24-hour veterinary referral hospital in Decatur."

Ultimately, Switchvox put an end to the call chasing and poor call quality, which for any small business focused on customer service, was a significant detriment to customer relations.



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www.digium.com • www.asterisk.org • +1 256-428-6000

Digium, Inc. • 445 Jan Davis Drive NW, Huntsville, AL 35806, USA